

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH
NEW DIGGINGS, WISCONSIN

Lafayette Co

HABS No Wis236

HABS
Wis

33- NEDig

1-

~~PHOTOGRAPHS~~ None

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT No 28

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historical American Building Survey
Alexander C. Guth - District Officer
1249 North Franklin Place, Milwaukee, Wis.

HABS
WIS.

33-NEDIG

1-

SAINT AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH
New Diggings, Lafayette County, Wis.

Owner (or Custodian). (Unused)

Date of Erection. 1844

Architect. Rev. Samuel Mazzuchelli

Builder. Rev. Samuel Mazzuchelli

Present Condition.

Number of Stories.

Materials of Construction. Exterior walls: planks, nine inches wide, with vertical lines cut every fourteen inches to imitate stone.

Other Existing Records. None known

Additional Data (See following pages)

SAINT AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH.

Saint Augustine's Church is located in the little village of New Diggings, Wisconsin. This is near the Illinois border line in the western part of the state.

The church was erected in 1844 by the Rev. Samuel Mazzuchelli. The church is unused at the present time. When it was built, New Diggings was as wild a mining town as Roaring Camp or any of the western villages settled by the forty-niners. An old history of Wisconsin picturesquely states that "saloons were as plentiful as lice in Egypt, and that gambling, drinking and vice of all sorts were as prevalent as in the neighboring town of Benton."

Father Mazzuchelli was born in Milan in 1806, the son of wealthy and cultured parents. He was a thoroughly educated man, being trained in architecture and able to speak several languages, including English. Having joined the Dominican order this priest came to America as missionary and first worked at Mackinac. Later he journeyed down thru Wisconsin and at the commission of Bishop Rosati, founder of the diocese of St. Louis, was appointed to the missions of Galena and Dubuque. In every locality he settled in he established a church or chapel,

always drawing the plans for the structure himself.

Father Mazzuchelli was the architect for the first Catholic churches in Galena, Davenport, Dubuque, Burlington and Benton. He also designed the first courthouse in Galena and the first state house in Iowa City, Iowa.

The style of St. Augustine's church indicates a blending of two types of architecture, namely Gothic and Colonial. Just why this should be is a mystery. Apparently the parish could not afford a stone structure so the architect-priest attempted to give the building the appearance of stone blocks by placing heavy pieces of planking horizontally one over the other. These are about nine inches wide. At intervals of approximately fourteen inches vertical lines are cut into this planking. When the building was painted white, it must have resembled stone quite closely. Even now with the paint all washed away showing only the grey weathered walls, it looks like Bedford stone at a distance.

The bell in the tower bears the inscription "Meenely's Bell Foundry, West Troy, N. Y. 1847", and in faded painted letters one can see inscribed "Milwaukie, W.T."


District Officer.

Revised 1936, H.C.F.